

## Water and Sewer Rate Adjustments

Water and sewer rates will be adjusted based on the most recent rates study. Beginning in 2024, water rates are increasing 3%, sewer rates are increasing 2%, and bulk water rates are increasing 3%.

“We are getting the word out so this isn’t taking anyone by surprise,” said Management Analyst Jacob Thode. “Rates go into effect January 2024 and will be reflected on your February bill.”

Veneta residents’ water and sewer rates are based on the current and long-term costs of providing services. Quality service requires that all materials, services, and personnel expenses are covered today

and for the future. In addition, it is the City’s responsibility to consider the current water and sewer systems’ capacities for supporting a larger, growing community—and be prepared fiscally to expand them.

Projections show that the City can expect to fund two important projects in the near future: an additional water reservoir on Bolton Hill at a cost of \$2.5 to \$3 million and a major expansion to the sewer plant at a cost of \$4 to \$6 million.

With over 5,000 residents and growing, the City is projected to run out of room in the sewer system,

(See “Rates” on page 4)

## Ceremonial Discharge of Firearms Permitted on Certain Occasions

The Veneta City Council recently amended city code regulating the ceremonial discharge of firearms for this narrow purpose, in addition to the existing permitted discharges conducted by peace officers or trained and permitted rodent/pest control workers.

The code change occurred in response to a request on behalf of the local Scouts Troop 50, in partnership with Veterans of Foreign Wars Fern Ridge-Jack Kelley Post 9448. The City Council held a series of meetings exploring the topic of whether to allow the ceremonial discharge of firearms. Preferences varied

strongly among City Council members and the public at large.

“City Council listened to multiple perspectives and crafted a limited permission that respects both people honoring others and people concerned with the sound. Council understood concerns expressed and collaboratively crafted a compromise tailored to minimize the location and occurrence of a ceremonial discharge,” City Administrator Matt Michel explained.

The result is that the ceremonial discharge of fire-

(See “Discharge of Firearms” on page 4)

## Welcome New City Recorder

Welcome Jennifer “Jen” Mirabile (pronounced Mirah-blay)! If you see her around, be sure to extend a warm welcome to our new Human Resources Coordinator/City Recorder.

Jen brings to the City of Veneta 18 years of experience and a passion for people and procedures. Jen spent most of her career working in Human Resources at the University of Oregon. She was the Administrative Manager for the Student Union, before moving on to HR operations.

Her vast experience includes working at the University of San Diego. Prior to that, Mirabile earned her master’s degree in training and development from Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia is also where she was born and raised.

What appealed to Jen about working at the City of Veneta is the opportunity to become what she calls a “true HR generalist” – handling many areas of Human Resources, from records, policies, and procedures to employee recruitment, benefits, and training.

(See “City Recorder” on page 4)

CIVIC CALENDAR NOVEMBER 2023		
All meetings held at City of Veneta, 88184 8th St, unless otherwise noted		
1	Park Board Meeting	4:30 p.m.
7	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 p.m.
8	Economic Development Committee Meeting	2:00 p.m.
10	Veteran's Day Observed - Closed 	Closed
13	City Council Meeting	6:30 p.m.
16	Municipal Court	8:30 a.m.
17	Business Assistance Meeting	9:00 a.m.
23	Thanksgiving Day - Closed 	Closed
24	Thanksgiving Day - Observed - Closed 	Closed
27	City Council Work Session	5:00 p.m.
30	Tree Lighting - Veneta Elementary School 	6:00 p.m.



## ATTENTION RESIDENTS:

A permit has been issued for a ceremonial discharge of firearms on November 11th from 11:15am –11:30am at City Park on Broadway. There will be a Lane County Sheriff's deputy present during the discharge of firearms.

## Department Updates

### ADMINISTRATION

- Did you know that small cities like Veneta are prime targets for cyberattacks? Most attackers assume that a small city doesn't have the ability to protect itself, so they'll infiltrate a small city's computers and then look for ways to access bank information or intercept emails that trick employees into sharing information. That's why Veneta is proactive on cybersecurity protections. Recently, the City tried to hack its own computers as part of a cybersecurity exercise. The City received a grant from the Oregon Department of Emergency Management to hire a "friendly" cybersecurity consultant to conduct the attacks on our computer network to discover weaknesses. We'll receive a report detailing the weak points of our network infrastructure and suggesting enhancements to keep our defenses strong.



### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Commission awarded Veneta a \$75,000 Local Government Grant Program grant for four pickle ball courts, including new nets and posts, fencing, benches and sidewalks! The new courts are planned to be behind the skate park at Territorial Park. The lottery-funded grant is a competitive grant program. The estimated total project cost is \$152,000.



### CITY COUNCIL

- First Grade classes at Veneta Elementary got to meet Mayor Keith Weiss and hear about the kinds of work a city does. He asked Public Works Director Kyle Schauer and City Administrator Matt Michel to join him. Mayor Weiss enjoyed spending time with the kids and answering all those questions that First Graders have! Mr. Schauer, a 31-year employee of the City, shared that he went to school at Veneta Elementary and remem-



bered sitting at the same desks that the kids were using today! The kids were surprised to hear that they had desks back then!

- Mayor Weiss and City staff met with staff from Congresswoman Hoyle's office and the Governor's Regional Solutions office. The Mayor highlighted five topics that touch on federal and state partnerships: (1) Highway 126 widening and the first phase starting at Huston Road in Veneta; (2) Broadband dollars that are mostly going to unserved and underserved areas, but Veneta is unequally served, which may not see funding; (3) County-wide Mobile Crisis Response programming by Lane County using Medicaid coverage; (4) the City's support of the Port of Coos Bay MEGA grant and the Coos Bay Rail Line land contribution for an off-leash dog park; and (5) the E. Hunter sidewalk improvement project. It's good to establish a working relationship with our state and federal elected officials, so we made sure they left with a City logo mug and sticker that will remind them about us!



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Management Analyst Jacob Thode and City Management Intern Suzannah Burke collaborated on submitting a Rural Opportunity Initiative Grant proposal to Business Oregon, a state agency supporting economic development. To develop the proposal, they talked with local businesses and economic development partners like Lane County and the Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce. The proposal is to expand Veneta's local entrepreneur ecosystem by funding investments on placemaking, youth and local entrepreneurship, and signage for the purpose of attracting travelers into the developing downtown district. We'll hear back on whether the City is selected as grant awardee in December. Fingers crossed!

(Continued on page 3)

## Department Updates continued

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT continued

- Veneta businesses that participated in surveys this year and last invited the City to work on creating an “economic identity” that they could promote as a community brand, or “placemaking”, as it’s called in economic development terms. The Veneta Economic Development Committee accepted that invitation by directing staff to convene a Community Identity Committee made up of a diverse array of voices. Staff put out an open invitation to the community for participants and subsequently convened the Committee. Staff is facilitating a process to capture descriptions of what makes Veneta feel like home or a place to be. The next step will be to go out to the public for feedback. Be on the lookout at the City’s Facebook page for more information!



### PUBLIC SAFETY

- The City of Veneta is a participant in the Lane Regional Resiliency Collaborative. Over the last two years Lane County has been leading local public agencies and utilities in preparing the community and building resiliency for the worst impacts of natural disasters. One initiative is to identify and map “islands” in the county, areas that would likely be isolated after a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. This work will feed directly into future grant applications, placement of resources, and multiple planning efforts to increase resilience.



- In October the City, Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce, and Lane County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) hosted a Business Forum about protecting business property. Recent property damage and theft at local businesses prompted a suggestion from the City’s Business Assistance Committee to have the City convene the business community to discuss the matter and offer action options. Business owners came together to hear about security cameras, City efforts, LSCO efforts, and opportunities to form a business Neighborhood Watch group. We look to empower our business community with this initial forum and more in the near future.

### PUBLIC WORKS

- EWEB notified the City that they’re proposing a 10% rate adjustment to Veneta’s wholesale water bill effective in February 2024. Specifically, the base charge would increase \$115.47 to \$1,270.20/month and the volume charge would increase 14.6 cents to \$1.606 per 1,000 gallons. Consumption patterns strongly influence the rates, and Veneta’s 5-year average water consumption has gone down, so the increase accounts for less use, in addition to planning for seismic upgrades, renewal of critical water storage facilities, and transmission lines. For context, EWEB is also proposing an 8.3% rate adjustment for their residential customers.



## Volunteer Veneta

Current volunteer opportunities for the City of Veneta and local non-profit organizations.



The City currently has several vacancies. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these committees, you can contact the City of Veneta by calling 542-935-2191 or visiting our website at [www.venetaoregon.gov](http://www.venetaoregon.gov)

#### City of Veneta

- ♦ Budget Committee - 1 vacancy
- ♦ Economic Development - 1 vacancy
- ♦ Park Board - 1 adult and 1 student vacancy

#### Senior Meals - Help Deliver Meals!

Senior & Disability Services relies on dedicated volunteers to help deliver meals to seniors. You can volunteer as little as two (2) hours per week. YOU can make a DIFFERENCE in your community! For more information, contact a **Volunteer Coordinator** at **541-682-1366**

#### Mid Lane Cares

There are vacancies for their new shower and laundry program. You can volunteer as little as once a week or once a month. Contact Deanna at 541-935-4555 to find out more.

## Rates continued

(Continued from page 1)

making at least one, if not both, of these projects a huge priority.

The City hopes to fund water and sewer projects by adjusting the rates at a sustainable pace, in step

## Discharge of Firearms continued

(Continued from page 1)

arms will be permitted, with many specifications in place. Those intending to conduct ceremonial discharge must get a permit in advance. It can only occur in specific locations, like the Veterans Memorial at City Park, a cemetery, or a church holding a ceremony. The blanks and rifles that are modified to allow only gas to be expelled are to be operated by military, peace officers, or trained Scouts leaders. The ceremonial discharge may occur only between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. for military funerals or

with comparable nearby city's water and sewer rates.

Some residents may qualify for utility financial assistance due to their reduced income level. For more information call 541-935-2191 or visit our website at [www.venetaoregon.gov](http://www.venetaoregon.gov)

memorials, and Memorial and Veterans Day holidays. A Lane County Sheriff's Office deputy must be present. The City will let the public know when a permit is issued and for what date and time, ensuring the public is aware of the 15-minute timeframe for discharge. The new code went into effect on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

**The first ceremonial discharge will occur on Veterans Day this year, November 11, 2023 between 11:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. at the Veterans Memorial at City Park.**

## City Recorder continued

(Continued from page 1)

A self-described "people person" Jen said another draw was Veneta's small town feel. As a mother of two college-aged kids, she now spends her downtime salmon fishing and crabbing with her husband at the coast, paddle boarding at the Fern Ridge Reservoir, and enjoying other outdoor activities. When possible, she loves traveling to Hawaii to visit her twin sister.

While Jen will be covering an incredible amount of

ground at the City of Veneta serving in her dual role as Human Resources Coordinator and City Recorder, you will most likely see her in action at upcoming public meetings, including City Council. She will also handle all public records requests.

Since starting work one month ago, Jen's smiling face is a signal of the passion and energy she brings to her new role.

## Preventing Flooding and Preparing for Winter

As the cold, wet, and sometimes snowy, season approaches, there are certain things the City asks residents to pay special attention to:

- Clearing public rights-of-way to ensure pedestrian safety and to maintain our streets and drainage systems. Public rights-of-way are routes over land that the public can use, even if it is privately owned. Piles of leaves, basketball hoops, garbage cans, illegally parked vehicles and recreational vehicles being left in the public rights-of-way sometimes result in a street sweeper, or a snowplow, being unable to clean a street properly.
- Preventing flooding and keeping drainage ditches clear requires regular maintenance and a commitment on behalf of both the City and its residents. Residents are asked to regularly remove debris, vegetation, or anything else that might obstruct the flow of water. Trash, plant clippings, even organic debris left over from mowing should be removed from all channels to prevent flooding.

Proper floodplain management relies on prevention. Veneta Municipal Code 13.15.010 states that depositing leaves or other debris in drainage ways is a violation of the code. The City is aware that residents are sometimes unaware of the code, and asks that residents pay special attention to notices concerning the prevention of flooding.

**The annual leaf pick-up program has now begun, and bagged leaves, left curbside, are picked up on Tuesday and Thursday of each week, lasting through January.**



- It is important to keep in mind that sidewalks are for pedestrians. The handicapped, elderly, children, people with strollers, and dog walkers are endangered when they can't walk on the sidewalk and are forced to detour into the street, particularly when leaves, ice, and snow may be present. Please do your part to keep drainage ditches and sidewalks clear to ensure the safety of all citizens.



## Backyard Burning Season

Outdoor backyard burning season is generally between October 1<sup>st</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup>, depending on weather conditions.

Each day during the burning season, LRAPA (Lane Regional Air Protection Agency) makes the determination if it is a suitable day for burning or not. Individuals looking to burn may either call LRAPA at 541-726-2976 or check the LRAPA website to ensure that the day's conditions are favorable for backyard burning.

Here are a few other safety requirements to keep in mind:

- You must have a copy of the Lane Regional Air Protections Agency's 'Burn Regulations' on the premises while backyard burning is taking place. You can find this printable permit on the Lane Fire Authority website at [www.lanefire.org](http://www.lanefire.org) by scrolling to the bottom of the page, clicking on the image, and printing a copy for your records.
- Burn piles must be no larger than 3 cubic yards (one cubic yard is equivalent to a box measuring 3 feet wide by 3 feet long by 3 feet deep for a total of 27 cubic feet)



- Burn piles should be constantly tended to by a responsible adult
- It is important to have water and tools (such as a fire extinguisher) available for controlling or extinguishing the fire
- Burn barrels are prohibited in Lane County
- It is prohibited to burn the following items: leaves, grass clippings, garbage, plastic, wire insulation, automotive parts, asphalt, petroleum by-products, petroleum treated products, tires, cardboard, clothing, demolition waste, animal remains or waste, construction waste, animal or vegetable matter, or other materials that may emit dense smoke, noxious odors or hazmat air contaminants
- Residents in violation of any of these regulations are subject to fines

For more information, or to determine if it is a burn day, call 541-726-2976 and press 5 or visit [www.lrapa.org/air-quality-protection/burning-overview/outdoor-burning/](http://www.lrapa.org/air-quality-protection/burning-overview/outdoor-burning/). To report a concern, call the LRAPA complaint line at 541-726-1930. In the event of an immediate threat, such as a fire spreading, call 911.

## Public Safety Report - September 2023

Incident Type	Calls			Cases		
	Calls	Same Month/ Prior Year	5-Year Average	Cases	Same Month/ Prior Year	5-Year Average
<b>Property</b> (Thefts, Criminal Mischief, Trespass, UUV, UEMV, Fraud)	36	49	89	12	12	43
<b>Person</b> (Assaults, Menacing, Harassment, Viol. Restraining Order)	24	31	32	4	5	1
<b>Public Order</b> (Disorderly Subject, Citizen Contact, Suspicious activity)	91	55	53	2	2	0
<b>Individual Welfare</b> (Welfare Checks, Missing Persons, Overdose)	21	22	29	2	3	2
<b>Vehicle</b> (DUII, DWS, Illegal Parking/Vehicles, Traffic Hazard)	26	32	22	2	0	0
<b>Offense Against State</b> (Drug, Warrants, Local City Ord)	4	10	8	1	0	4
<b>Civil</b> (Civil Service, Eviction Process)	11	3	6	0	0	0
<b>Neighborhood Watch</b>	2	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Traffic Stops</b>	26	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>50</b>

thank  
you!

We would like to thank our generous sponsors that donated funds, and our volunteers that helped make this year's Veneta Celebration Run a success!

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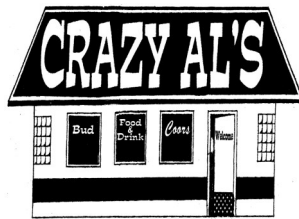
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## VOLUNTEERS

### VCR Committee

- Craig Soderberg
- Alexa Benson
- Stephanie Freeman

- Heather Blake
- Kari Westlund
- Daniel Phillips
- Darlene Harris

- Rebecca Cox
- Mandi Powers
- Tressa Miller

### Community Members

- Elias Michel
- Lane County Sheriff's Deputies
- Joy Cart

thank  
you!

### City Staff

- Matt Michel
- Jacob Thode
- Ann Haxby

- Suzannah Burke
- Matt Laird
- Public Works Team